

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Apparatus for treating the surface of a floor, said apparatus comprising:

a wheeled vehicle having a floor surface treating unit for treating the floor surface upon movement of the wheeled vehicle relative to the floor surface, and a drive motor operable to propel said wheeled vehicle relative to the floor surface; and

a control system for controlling operation of said apparatus, the control system comprising a handle mounted on said wheeled vehicle for being grasped by an operator to maneuver said vehicle relative to the floor surface, and a traverse switch unit movable between a first position corresponding to a traverse mode of the apparatus in which the vehicle is propelled by the drive motor to move relative to the floor surface and a second position corresponding to an idle mode of the apparatus in which the drive motor is ineffective to propel the vehicle to move relative to the floor surface, the traverse switch unit being mounted on the handle such that the traverse switch unit is accessible for movement by the operator toward the first position of the traverse switch unit corresponding to the traverse mode of the apparatus without the operator having to generally release the handle.

2. Apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein the traverse switch unit is mounted on a portion of the handle adapted to be grasped by the operator whereby grasping of said portion of the handle effects movement of the traverse switch unit toward its first position corresponding to the traverse mode of the apparatus.

3. Apparatus as set forth in claim 2 wherein the traverse switch unit is biased toward its second position corresponding to the idle mode of the apparatus, grasping of said portion of the handle effecting movement of the

5 traverse switch unit against said bias toward the first position of the traverse switch unit corresponding to the traverse mode of the apparatus, the bias being sufficient to move the traverse switch unit toward its second position corresponding to the idle mode of the apparatus when the operator releases said portion of the handle.

5 4. Apparatus as set forth in claim 3 further comprising a directional switch unit mounted on the handle for selectively controlling the direction of travel of the vehicle between a forward direction of travel and a reverse direction of travel, the directional switch unit being located relative to the traverse switch unit such that the directional switch unit is accessible by the operator for controlling the direction of travel of the vehicle without the operator having to generally release said portion of the handle.

5 5. Apparatus as set forth in claim 4 wherein the traverse switch unit and the directional switch unit are mounted on the handle sufficiently close to each other such that the traverse switch unit and directional switch unit are accessible by one hand of the operator grasping said portion of the handle without the operator releasing said one hand from said portion of the handle.

5 6. Apparatus as set forth in claim 5 wherein the handle has a front and a back, the handle being arranged such that the front of the handle generally faces the operator when the operator grasps the said portion of the handle whereby when the operator grips the said portion of the handle the palm of the one hand of the operator generally engages the front of the handle and the fingers of said one hand generally engage the back of the handle, the traverse switch unit being mounted on the front of the handle such that the palm of the one hand generally engages the traverse switch unit to move the traverse switch unit toward its first position corresponding to the traverse mode of the apparatus when the operator grips the handle.

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7. Apparatus as set forth in claim 5 wherein the traverse switch unit comprises an elongate button, the front of the handle having a channel sized for receiving the elongate button, the traverse switch unit further comprising at least one biasing member disposed in the channel and acting against the elongate button to bias the button generally outward relative to the handle toward the second position of the traverse switch unit corresponding to the idle mode of the apparatus.

8. Apparatus as set forth in claim 7 wherein the traverse switch unit further comprises a switch housing mounted on the front of the handle and having an elongate channel formed therein to define said channel sized for receiving the elongate button.

9. Apparatus as set forth in claim 6 wherein the directional switch unit is mounted on the back of the handle.

10. Apparatus as set forth in claim 5 wherein the traverse switch unit is a first traverse switch unit positioned for movement toward its second position corresponding to the traverse mode of the apparatus upon grasping of the handle by said one hand of the operator, the apparatus further comprising a second traverse switch unit mounted on the handle in spaced relationship with said first traverse switch unit generally at a portion of the handle grasped by the other hand of the operator.

11. Apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein the handle is generally arcuate and is secured against rotation relative to the frame.

12. Apparatus as set forth in claim 11 wherein the traverse switch unit comprises an elongate button, the handle having a channel sized for

- 5 receiving the elongate button, the traverse switch unit further comprising at least one biasing member disposed in the channel and acting against the elongate button to bias the button generally outward relative to the handle toward the second position of the traverse switch unit corresponding to the idle mode of the apparatus.

13. Apparatus as set forth in claim 12 wherein the elongate button is arcuate in accordance with the curvature of the handle.

14. Apparatus as set forth in claim 13 wherein the traverse switch unit further comprises an arcuate housing mounted on the front of the handle and having an elongate, arcuate channel formed therein to define said channel sized for receiving the elongate button.

15. Apparatus as set forth in claim 11 wherein the handle is generally semi-circular.

- 5 16. Apparatus as set forth in claim 11 wherein the wheeled vehicle further has a fixed wheel assembly supporting the wheeled vehicle for ease of movement relative to the floor surface, the fixed wheel assembly having a pair of wheels in laterally spaced relationship, the handle of the control system having a length at least about equal to the lateral spacing between the wheels of the fixed wheel assembly.